

Shared drive handover procedure

Prepare a shared folder so its next owner can find the authoritative files, understand unresolved issues and confirm access before accepting responsibility.

Independent public-source work by Cleargrain Docs. Prepared 9 October 2026. This is a proposed business procedure based on three U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) guidance documents. It has not been run on a client drive.

Scope and authority

NARA wrote the source guidance for U.S. federal agencies. Federal records schedules, transfer requirements and statutory responsibilities belong to that context. A private business should use its own approved retention rules, contracts and legal advice. This adaptation does not certify compliance or authorize deletion, wider access or a system migration.

Use the procedure for a defined handover or folder-organization project. Keep the original content available until the owner approves the result. Record unknowns explicitly rather than guessing which version is authoritative.

Assign responsibility before touching files

Role to assign	Decision or responsibility
Content owner	Sets scope, identifies authoritative records and accepts the handover.
Records or policy lead	Confirms retention rules and restrictions; resolves unclear record status.
IT or system owner	Confirms access, recoverability, file integrity and platform constraints.
Operator	Inventories content, makes approved changes and records what changed.
Hold or legal contact	Identifies litigation, investigation or other preservation restrictions.

These role descriptions are an operational adaptation of NARA N1, Appendix A. One person may hold several roles; actual names and approval authority must be supplied by the adopting organization.

Before work can start

Write down the folder scope, approver, agreed destination, naming pattern and exclusions. Ask the policy lead whether any hold applies. Ask IT how to recover the original. Unclear authority or an unverified recovery route pauses the affected work.

Inventory and agree the plan

1 Record what is there

Create an inventory before reorganizing. Capture current path, file name, file type, size, available creation or modification date, owner if known, and any access restriction. Record the folder structure and upcoming IT changes that could affect the work. NARA recommends collecting volume, formats, dates and existing controls. Do not describe a missing field as zero. [N1, Appendix A]

2 Identify the record copy

Ask the content owner to identify the copy that documents the activity. A newer timestamp, a familiar name or a file named final is not sufficient by itself. Keep alternative versions linked in the register until the owner resolves them. Record personal, reference and business material separately without deleting it. [N1, sections 3, 4 and 6]

3 Map destinations and naming rules

Group content by agreed business function or activity. Decide how related records will stay together, including references to material outside the drive. Prepare an old-path to new-path map and flag collisions before applying a batch rename. NARA connects folder structure with a file plan and consistent naming. The mapping log is Cleargrain's implementation choice for an auditable handover. [N1, section 6; N2, sections 3 and 4]

4 Run a small approved pilot

Use a limited, representative folder first. Include different file types and at least one linked document if the scope contains one. Check that files open, names are meaningful, references still work and intended recipients have the approved access. Record lessons and update the instructions before the wider rollout. NARA explicitly recommends a pilot; this check sequence is an adaptation. [N1, Appendix A]

Pilot decision

Proceed only when the owner accepts the pilot and IT confirms the proposed structure works on the actual platform. Record rejected naming choices, unresolved versions and excluded folders. A failed test is an issue to resolve, not a reason to silently change the scope.

Apply changes and transfer responsibility

5 Apply only approved changes

Work from the approved map. Log each old and new path, the action, operator and date. Preserve relevant metadata and links. Stop the affected item if a destination already exists or its contents differ from the expected record. Check platform-specific path and naming limits before the batch. The action log and collision stop are implementation controls derived from NARA's record integrity and naming guidance. [N1, sections 4 and 6; N2]

6 Keep disposal separate

A duplicate-looking file, old date or temporary-looking name does not establish permission to delete. NARA's federal guidance ties disposition to approved schedules and calls for review with subject-matter experts. Under this business adaptation, put disposal candidates in the issue register and route them to the organization's authorized approver. Do not delete under this handover procedure. [N1, section 4 and Appendix A]

7 Verify the result

Reconcile the inventory against the completed change log. Account for every item as retained in place, moved, renamed or held for review. Open representative files from each format and changed folder, test important links and verify approved access. Investigate missing or unreadable items before acceptance. This reconciliation method is Cleargrain's adaptation of NARA's retrievability, usability and integrity objectives. [N1, section 4]

8 Hand over the operating record

Give the next owner the folder map, authoritative-copy notes, unresolved issues, approval record and maintenance instructions. Confirm where new records should be filed and who handles future exceptions. Agree the next review date rather than inventing a universal schedule. NARA recommends written guidance, training, maintenance and clear responsibilities. [N1, Appendix A]

Exceptions that stop the affected item

Issue	Required next step
Unclear owner or record copy	Ask the content owner; retain all relevant candidates.
Retention or hold uncertainty	Refer to the policy or hold contact before change or disposal.
Broken link or unreadable file	Ask IT to resolve and retest; keep the issue open.
Access request outside approved scope	Get the owner's authorization before changing permissions.

Naming rules and handover checklist

The conventions below reproduce the substance of NARA's 2015 transfer-oriented naming guidance. They are conservative defaults for this adaptation, not universal limits of modern software. Check the actual systems before adoption. [N2]

NARA convention	How to apply it
Consistent, meaningful components	Keep project, date and version components in the same position.
Restricted characters	Use letters a-z, digits 0-9, underscores and hyphens. Avoid spaces.
File extension	Keep the extension; use no additional period in the file name.
Folder hierarchy	NARA recommends no more than eight levels.
Full path	NARA recommends a total path of no more than 255 characters.

Handover record to complete

The accompanying CSV is deliberately blank. It is an operational template, not fabricated evidence of completed work.

Field group	Record
Scope	Folder or collection, current owner, next owner and approved destination.
Traceability	Old path, new path, record identifier, title, creator and relevant dates.
Control	Record-copy decision, access restriction, applicable retention rule and hold status.
Verification	Action, operator, action date, open/read test, link test and exception reference.
Acceptance	Approver, approval date, unresolved issues and next review date.

Release checks

- Every in-scope item has an accounted-for outcome and old-to-new traceability.
- The owner has resolved record-copy questions or accepted clearly listed exceptions.
- Representative open/read and link checks have recorded results.
- Approved recipients can access the intended files without wider sharing.
- The next owner has accepted the map, issue register and maintenance instructions.

If any check is incomplete, describe the handover as pending and identify the specific owner needed. No approvals or verification results have been prefilled.

Evidence and adaptation notes

The procedure is original synthesis. The source documents are real, public guidance. The sequence, operator log, stop rules, release checklist and blank form are proposed implementation choices, not claims that NARA mandates this exact workflow.

Source	What it supports in this procedure
N1 Shared drive bulletin	Scope, roles, inventory, authoritative records, security, review, pilot and maintenance.
N2 Naming appendix	Naming components, supported characters, file paths and folder depth.
N3 Metadata appendix	Identifier, title, description, creator and date concepts used in the register.

N3 defines minimum metadata for transfer of permanent federal electronic records. The blank business register borrows useful descriptive concepts only. It does not reproduce every mandatory federal metadata element and is not a NARA transfer package.

Primary sources

N1 NARA shared drive guidance. Accessed 9 October 2026. <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2012/2012-02.html>

N2 NARA file and folder naming. Accessed 9 October 2026.
<https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2015/2015-04-appendix-b.html>

N3 NARA metadata terms. Accessed 9 October 2026. <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2015/2015-04-appendix-a.html>

Reuse and limits

NARA's use policy says its U.S. government-produced work is in the public domain and available worldwide under CC0 1.0. The policy also warns that not everything hosted by NARA has that status. This work uses NARA-authored guidance, not donated collections, third-party templates, photographs, logos or seals. [N4]

N4 NARA reuse policy. Accessed 9 October 2026. <https://www.archives.gov/global-pages/privacy.html>

No files were deleted, customer systems reviewed, retention schedules approved or savings measured for this public example. The deliverable demonstrates turning authoritative material into a usable document with explicit decisions and evidence.